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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 February 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council presents study on the situation of human rights of persons living with albinism

Society for Threatened Peoples is welcoming the study of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights of persons living with albinism which will be presented to the 28th session of the Human Rights Council. Despite the fact that there is a massive lack of data and background on the livelihood of persons with albinism around the world, it's a ground breaking initiative to present for the first time a comprehensive report to the Human Rights Council on the challenges persons with albinism (PWA) are facing around the world. Before in September 2013, the High Commissioner for Human Rights had delivered a report on human rights violations against PWA. Both initiatives were extremely important and helpful to create more awareness regarding the difficult situation of PWA around the world.

The lack of valuable information on the plight of PWA constitutes one the most important challenges for new initiatives to facilitate life for PWA. Even in very much industrialized countries with an effective education system, the knowledge on the challenges PWA are confronting is extremely limited. Ignorance and disinformation are prevailing. The origin of albinism and the high vulnerability to sun and bright light, the limited eye view and the high risk to attract skin cancer are mostly unknown in broader public. Therefore information -, education - and awareness-raising campaigns would be very helpful in all countries. Having in mind that the percentage of PWA in African countries is much more important than on other continents international development cooperation with African states should include education- and awareness-raising campaigns on PWA in rural areas.

Documenting the plight of PWA who are suffering from discrimination, social exclusion, insecurity and threats should be a pre-condition for more international efforts to create more respect and a better understanding of the problems of PWA and will enhance international cooperation and support for PWA. The United Nations Human Rights Council should play a leading role in the promotion of the rights of PWA.

Until today the Human Rights Council, the Independent Experts and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights were unable to fulfill this leading role because these institutions were unable to create meaningful mechanisms and structures to care about the PWA issue. There is an urgent need to decide upon a dedicated mechanism to promote the rights of PWA on behalf of the United Nations. Unfortunately the mandates of most Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council are not covering the PWA issue. Neither the Rapporteur on "Minorities", nor those covering "Violence against Women, Health, Racism, Poverty, Education and Torture issues" had shown special attention to the challenges and plight of PWA. Therefore there is an urgent need to create a new mandate for a Special Rapporteur on PWA or to red-define the existing mandates of Special Rapporteurs in order to create an efficient mechanism in the Human Rights Council to address the problems of PWA.

The Human Rights Council should:

- urge the international community to address the problems of PWA and to enhance cooperation in order to fight against impunity for abductions and murders of PWA,
- call on the international community to include education and awareness-raising programs on PWA in their development cooperation especially with African states,
- create a new mandate for a Special Rapporteur on PWA or re-define the mandates of the existing Special Rapporteurs in order to create an efficient mechanism in the Human Rights Council to address the issues of PWA.